1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[537] 195 large repertoire of stories. In Lepcha speech there are two kinds of variation to the everyday vocabulary for added richness and elegance; there is the honorific vocabulary, and allusive periphrasis, or *tang-bor*. The honorific vocabulary consists, I am informed, entirely of loan words from Tibetan or Sikkimese; it is meant always to be used to social superiors, but in Zongu only a few of these honorific words are current, and then only in connection with religion. The honorific terms for the parts of the body are used in describing supernaturals, and the honorific terms for 'presents' and 'to offer' are used for religious gifts and sacrifices. Those who can manage this honorific vocabulary would use it in talking to representatives of the State.

The *tang-bor* on the other hand are used a great deal. The nearest parallel to a *tang-bor* is an analogy or comparison which is used in the place of the idea which is intended to be conveyed. To give a somewhat over-simplified illustration, it is as though an Englishman were to say 'I am a horse' or 'I am a lord', instead of 'I am as hungry as a horse' 'I am as drunk as a lord'. A great number of these *tang-bor* are traditional; a good speaker however will make up his own. Quite a number are now incomprehensible, either because the references are forgotten, because they retain archaic terms, or because they have been borrowed from another district. A great number of the allusions are local, and a stranger will often be unable to understand the local *tang-bor*. Some are used for toning down disagreeable or shocking expressions, such as 'he has closed his eyes' for 'he is dead', 'the maize harvest is ripe' for 'has a sexual erection'. Others are humorous: a monkey is called 'pretty-face', a he-goat 'daddy-talk-too-much'; Lepchas are referred to as 'the drinkers', Nepali as 'the contradictory ones'. Others again are descriptive; the bear is 'he who leans forward', the fish 'he who throws away water', stolen goods 'prison come after'. [198] *Tang-bor* can be used as a secret language, but it is chiefly employed for elegance and humour. In stories, especially the semi-historical stories, the principal characters always speak to one another in *tang-bor*.

537 [517] Story-telling is the major Lepcha art and distraction. The favourite of all situations for story-telling is round the fire after work in the evenings; on these occasions the long stories will be told, stories which may take five or six evenings in their telling, one person doing the talking and the others listening. But this is not the only time when stories are told; in long tedious work, such as

2: Morris T.-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

several long sausage-like pieces of dough, similar to those described for use with the *Go-sum*. They were arranged in the form of a square, inside which were now placed three triangular cups and one round lamp, also made of dough. At each corner of the figure a *Ŷay* was placed: yellow, in the rear left-hand corner; red in the right; blue in the front right corner; and white in the left. In addition to these were inscribed wooden labels, arrows, and spinning rods, exactly the same as already described. In front of all was a row of small bowls, some containing rice and some water; one of them also had a rose stuck in the centre of it.

The whole offering was now scattered with rice and other grains, and pieces of coloured wool and bits of cotton were laid on it to represent the clothing of the servants. A few roses and other flowers were stuck in here and there; but these had no significance and were merely added to make the whole thing look pretty. Finally, a narrow piece of bamboo, about six inches long, was brought and placed behind the row of cups and in front of the main figure. This was fitted with six wicks, which were later lighted.

Several young Lamas now arrived carrying musical instruments from the monastery, while others were hastily constructing an altar against one end of the wall of stones. It was merely one of the ordinary low Tibetan tables with a cloth over it. In the centre was a large plate of rice decorated with three high cones of butter: to the left was a bowl of *chi;* and to the right a large lump of butter floating in water. In front of the large plate of rice was an exactly similar but smaller one; and in front of this again a large dough *torma*, with six small bowls to its right. These contained, from left to right, water, a wick floating in butter, rice, rice decorated with roses, and two more filled with water.

The altar was placed at right angles to the second Dorje-Lopön, who sat facing the *Gedo*. As soon as everything had been placed in position the altar was sprinkled with water and he, together with Tafoor, started to chant in a droning sing-song voice.

7: Hooker D-5 (1849-1851) 1854
AK5 Lepcha AK5

Some[1] are supposed to be antidotes against [752]
poison, and hence fetch an enormous price; they are of a 415
peculiar wood, rarer and paler-coloured. I have paid a [435]
guinea for one such, hardly different from the common
sort, which cost but 4*d.* or 6*d.* MM. Huc and Gabet
graphically allude to this circumstance, when wishing to
purchase cups at Lhassa, where their price is higher, as
they are all imported from the Himalaya. The knots from
which they are formed, are produced on the roots of oaks,
maples, and other mountain forest trees, by a parasitical [137]
plant, known to botanists as *Balanophora*.

Their intoxicating drink, which seems more to excite 273
than to debauch the mind, is partially fermented Murwa
grain (*Eleusine Coracana*). Spirits are rather too strong
to be relished raw, and when a glass of wine is given to
one of a party, he sips it, and hands it round to all the
rest. A long bamboo flute, with four or six burnt holes 534
far below the mouth-hole, is the only musical instrument
I have seen in use among them. When travelling, and the 517
fatigues of the day are over, the Lepchas will sit for hours
chatting, telling stories, singing in a monotonous tone,
or blowing this flute. I have often listened with real 533
pleasure to the simple music of this rude instrument; its
low and sweet tones are singularly Æolian, as are the
airs usually played, which fall by octaves: it seems to
harmonize with the solitude of their primæval forests, and
he must have a dull ear who cannot draw from it the
indication of a contented mind, whether he may relish its
soft musical notes or not. Though always equipped for 224
the chase, I fancy the Lepcha is no great sportsman;
there is little to be pursued in this region, and he is not
driven by necessity to follow what there is.

Their marriages are contracted in childhood, and the 583
wife purchased by money, or by service rendered to the 582

[1] [i.e., wooden cups.—Amlyst]